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ABSTRACT

Success by Eight is a pilot program of the Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools for students in kindergarten through grade 2. The initiative is designed to provide a group of six pilot schools with training and additional resources in implementing a specific set of components to prepare students for the third grade. These components are: (1) learning community options (multiage, multiyear, and single-grade classrooms); (2) clear standards and benchmarks; (3) school-based professional development; (4) team teaching; (5) full-day kindergarten; (6) family-school connections; (7) challenging, complex, and connected curriculum; and (8) quality early childhood practices. The benchmarks described in this publication have been created to guide implementation of the initiative as well as evaluation. For each component, benchmarks are divided into baseline, investigation, exploration, and three implementation stages. Charts for each component shows what should be accomplished at each of the benchmark stages. A glossary is included. (SLD)

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SUCCESS BY EIGHT EVALUATION: BENCHMARKS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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These benchmarks were developed by the Office of Planning, Testing, and Evaluation and the Office of Early Childhood and Family Services. The benchmarks were developed as one of the evaluation tools for the Success by Eight program. They describe the process of school change and the behaviors that characterize best practice for each of the program components. These benchmarks will also serve as a tool for self-evaluation as schools and individual teachers work toward full implementation of the program. The benchmarks are not intended to replace individual school plans but rather to support the development of those plans. All rights are reserved. Do not reproduce without written authorization from the authors.

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Introduction to Success by Eight Implementation Benchmarks

In September 1998, Fairfax County Public Schools launched an innovative pilot initiative—**Success by Eight**—for students in kindergarten through grade 2. The initiative is designed to provide a group of six “pilot” schools with training and additional resources for implementing a specific set of components to prepare students for the third grade. These eight interrelated components include:

Success by Eight Components

- Learning Community Options (multiage, multiyear, and single grade classrooms)
- Clear Standards and Benchmarks
- School-based Professional Development
- Team Teaching
- Full Day Kindergarten
- Family-School Connections
- Challenging, Complex, and Connected Curriculum
- Quality Early Childhood Practices (consists of ten elements)

The following benchmarks were created for schools to guide their implementation of the initiative as well as to serve as a framework for assessing the stage of implementation at which a school may be at specified points in time. The benchmarks for each component are divided into six stages along a continuum:

- Baseline
- Investigation
- Exploration
- Emergent Implementation
- Transition Implementation
- Proficient Implementation

At the Baseline stage, schools follow a traditional model of organization and instructional delivery. During the Investigation stage, schools begin to review information regarding the component to determine interest of the school community and the feasibility for implementing the new model. During the Exploration stage, schools decide to implement the component and plan for and prepare the school community for the new model. Implementation of the component/model is characterized by three stages—Emergent, Transition, and Proficient. At the Emergent stage, schools begin implementing the component. Implementation tends to be sporadic across subjects, classrooms, and/or the school. At the Transition stage, implementation is extended and tends to be at the mid-point. Implementation is evident across many subjects, classrooms, and/or much of the school. At the Proficient stage, the school reaches its vision for the component. The component is implemented consistently across all subjects, classrooms, and/or the entire school.

Learning Community Options

A school's organizational design can include multiage, multiyear (looping), and/or single grades in response to the needs of the school and community.

- Single grade – traditional grouping of children of the same age into the same grade
- Multiyear (looping) – a program that groups children by grade level and allows children to stay with the same teacher for two years; the teacher “graduates” with the children to the next grade level
- Multiage – classrooms that group children across an age span of up to four years in which children remain with the same teacher/teaching team for more than one year.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
▪ Organize K-2 classes by grade level ▪ Teach students in classes with same age peers ▪ Teach students for one year	▪ Conduct a needs assessment within school and community to determine the level of interest in multiage/multiyear classes ▪ Identify a team to investigate multiage/multiyear classes ▪ Gather information on multiage/multiyear programs from: a) literature b) classroom observations and site visits	▪ Develop an implementation plan for multiage/multiyear classes ▪ Identify resources necessary for implementation of multiage/multiyear classes (e.g., funds, staff, instructional materials) ▪ Begin to implement learning experiences across grade levels or between classrooms (e.g., cross-classroom curriculum-based projects, interest groups, book clubs) and identify potential implementation issues ▪ Consult with other schools on resolving barriers to implementation	▪ Implement learning community options that may include multiage, multiyear, and/or single grade classes ▪ Begin to offer families choice of placing their student in multiage, multiyear, and/or single grade classes based on proposed learning community options ▪ Allocate resources to support limited implementation of multiage and multiyear classes	▪ Expand implementation of multiage and multiyear classes ▪ Offer families choice of placing their student in multiage, multiyear, and/or single grade classes based on expanded learning community options ▪ Allocate additional resources to support implementation of multiage and multiyear classes	▪ Fully implement multiage and multiyear classes to meet the needs of the school community ▪ Offer families choice of placing their student in multiage, multiyear, and/or single grade classes based on full implementation of learning community options ▪ Maximize resources to support full implementation of multiage/multiyear classes

Clear Standards and Benchmarks

High expectations for what students should know and be able to do are set for all students (e.g., general education, special education, ESL). These expectations the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) - reflect state standards (SOL) and those of national organizations. A variety of ongoing classroom-level assessments supplement division-level tests that are used to "benchmark" student performance.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
- Define standards by POS objectives - Assess students primarily through textbook tests, pencil-paper, ditto sheets, and worksheets - Hold different expectations for different students	- Identify staff to investigate alternative methods of student assessment - Investigate developing higher expectations for all students - Gather information, review, and discuss alternative forms of assessment - Conduct site visits to classrooms using alternative forms of assessment	- Identify a variety of student assessments to measure achievement of standards - Identify high expectations for all students - Develop a plan to implement alternative assessments in classes	- Begin to implement alternative forms of assessment in a few subject areas to measure student progress (e.g., performance assessment, portfolios, rubrics) - Implement challenging, higher expectations for general education students	- Expand assessment to include on-going, authentic assessment (e.g., anecdotal notes, running records) to measure student progress in most subject areas - Implement challenging, higher expectations for general education students and for some special populations (e.g., ESL, special education, compensatory education)	- Implement ongoing student assessment using a variety of assessment methods, as appropriate for the students, subject areas, and activities - Implement challenging, higher expectations for general education students and all special populations

School-based Professional Development

Schools provide opportunities for collaborative learning teams to become familiar with current educational research and teaching methods. Topics for professional development are based on the assessed needs and interests of school staff and the learning needs of students.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Participate in training required by the school division and individual choice - Participate in school-wide in-service training where topics are chosen by others	- Gather information on methods of providing professional development programs from: - literature - workshops - discussion groups - Conduct an assessment of teachers/instructional staff to determine their level of understanding of each component of the Success by Eight initiative - Identify areas/topics of staff needs and interests based upon assessment	- Define goals for professional development as a school team and as individuals based on assessment - Develop a plan for professional development based on the assessment - Identify and allocate necessary resources for professional development and team building (e.g. personnel, funds, materials) - Develop a timeline for professional development opportunities	- Begin to implement school-based professional development opportunities (e.g., site visits, book groups, collaborative learning teams) - Develop a plan for application of new knowledge from professional development opportunities - Identify resources to implement changes to the classroom instructional program based on information gained from professional development opportunities - Create a format for school-based staff to discuss and evaluate professional development opportunities	- Continue to implement school-based professional development opportunities with additional options for learning - Implement changes to the instructional program based on learning from professional development opportunities and reflect on the effectiveness of the changes - Allocate resources for implementation of classroom instructional programs based on information from professional development opportunities and identify resources for follow-up support of new programs - Discuss and evaluate professional development opportunities and modify the plan as needed	- Implement a multifaceted professional development plan - Continue application, reflection, and modification of the instructional program based on learning from professional development opportunities - Maximize resources for implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of classroom instructional programs developed as a result of professional development opportunities - Conduct on-going discussion and evaluation of professional development opportunities and make needed adjustments

Team Teaching

Two or more teachers (e.g., general education, special education, specialist) collaborate to share expertise and responsibilities (i.e., plan, develop, deliver, and assess instruction to a group or groups of children) and to ensure a variety of opportunities for flexible grouping and differentiated instruction.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
Teach students with little or no collaboration among colleagues	- Gather information on the use of team teaching in K-2 classes from: - literature - workshops - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues - Conduct a needs assessment to determine teacher interest in team teaching - Identify staff strengths and staff development needs	- Develop a plan for implementing team teaching - Create a process for sharing information about student assessment, evaluation, and progress among members of the teaching team - Identify teaching teams - Consult with other schools about overcoming implementation concerns	- Begin to implement team teaching configurations (e.g., subject area, by teaching team, by grade level) - Sporadically provide support for team planning time during the school day - Allocate staff time and responsibilities to support limited team teaching implementation - Initiate a process for providing peer support and the opportunity to reflect on implementation of team teaching	- Expand implementation of team teaching configurations - Often provide support for team planning time during the school day - Allocate staff time and responsibilities to support expansion of team teaching - Review and refine the process for providing peer support and the opportunity to reflect on implementation of team teaching	- Consistently implement team teaching configurations across all classes, grade levels, disciplines, and subject areas - Consistently provide support for team planning time during the school day - Maximize the use of school resources to support team teaching - Institutionalize the process for providing peer support and the opportunity to reflect on implementation of team teaching

Full Day Kindergarten

A full day kindergarten program extends and enriches opportunities for literacy development, understanding of mathematical concepts, and social interaction, while fostering positive attitudes toward school and learning.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
Offer half-day kindergarten classes in which students attend in either the morning or afternoon	- Conduct a survey to determine parental interest in full day kindergarten - Gather information on benefits of full day kindergarten and implementation of models from: - literature - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues - Hold a session for parents to share information on full day kindergarten models	- Develop a plan and timeline for implementation of full day kindergarten classes - Identify resources necessary to implement full day kindergarten - Consult with other schools to identify solutions to overcome implementation problems for full day kindergarten - Review curriculum and schedules for increased opportunities for academic and social growth of students	- Implement multiage and/or single grade full day kindergarten classes - Allocate resources to support this level of implementation of full day kindergarten classes - Begin to extend and enrich learning opportunities to individual students and small groups in language arts and math throughout the day - Begin to increase opportunities for integration of art, music, and physical education in the learning environment	- Assess and adapt implementation of multiage and/or single grade full day kindergarten classes - Allocate resources to support this level of implementation of full day kindergarten - Continue to extend and enrich learning opportunities to individual students and small groups in language arts and math throughout the day - Offer additional opportunities for integration of art, music, and physical education in the learning environment	- Refine implementation of multiage and/or single grade full day kindergarten classes - Maximize resources to support full implementation of a full day kindergarten program - Extend and enrich learning opportunities to individual students and small groups in language arts and math throughout the day across multiage groups - Consistently offer opportunities for integration of art, music, and physical education in the learning environment

Family-School Connections

Partnerships provide opportunities for families to be active members in the school community with the goal of supporting student learning and increasing student achievement.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Administer school programs with limited family input - Involve some families in class-based activities	- Conduct a needs assessment of families to determine areas in which they would like to become involved - Identify staff and family members to investigate creating meaningful family-school connections - Gather information on successful family involvement strategies in schools from: - literature - workshops - parent/teacher organizations - conversations with colleagues	- Invite families to participate in a dialogue for the purpose of developing goals for the school community - Identify areas where families can have input in school decision making - Initiate a process and develop a plan for involving families in decision-making - Review <i>National PTA Standards for Parent and Family Involvement</i> and <i>FCPS Supports National PTA's Standards for Parent Involvement</i>	- Initiate family participation in school activities to include some decision-making that affects school planning, program development, and/or use of resources - Begin to provide families with a variety of opportunities to use their interests, skills, and abilities to promote growth and achievement of their children (e.g., parent conferences, participating in homework, parent nights) - Provide an opportunity for families to evaluate their satisfaction with family involvement activities - Begin to implement <i>National PTA Standards for Parent and Family Involvement</i> and <i>FCPS Supports National PTA's Standards for Parent Involvement</i>	- Expand family participation in school activities to include decision-making that affects school planning, program development, and/or use of resources - Frequently provide families with a variety of opportunities to use their interests, skills, and abilities to promote student growth and achievement - Provide occasional opportunities for families to evaluate their satisfaction with family involvement activities - Expand implementation of <i>National PTA Standards for Parent and Family Involvement</i> and <i>FCPS Supports National PTA's Standards for Parent Involvement</i>	- Routinely involve families in leadership roles charged with decision-making responsibility regarding activities such as school planning, program development, and use of resources - Consistently provide families with a variety of opportunities to use their interests, skills, and abilities to promote student growth and achievement - Provide on-going opportunities for families to evaluate their satisfaction with family involvement activities - Fully implement <i>National PTA Standards for Parent and Family Involvement</i> and <i>FCPS Supports National PTA's Standards for Parent Involvement</i>

Challenging, Complex, and Connected Curriculum

Curriculum, often organized around themes, makes connections within and between disciplines and provides opportunities for students to develop meaningful and in-depth knowledge of core content areas.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
- Teach subjects (e.g., math, writing, science, etc.) as separate disciplines - Teach without the aide of technology	- Gather information on developing challenging, complex, and connected curriculum from: - literature - workshops - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues - Review software and technology innovations for integration into the curriculum	- Identify necessary resources for collaborative planning to establish connections among curricular areas - Develop an instructional plan to study curriculum and identify common POS objectives across disciplines - Acknowledge the arts as an integral part of the curriculum - Develop a plan for integrating software and technology into the curriculum	- Infrequently implement activities that connect more than one discipline - Begin to include art and music specialists in curriculum and theme planning - Begin to teach based on connections among content disciplines that reflect a theme, year-long concept, and/or school plan - Introduce the inquiry process to students across curricular areas - Initiate the use of software and technology to support the curriculum	- Frequently implement activities that connect more than one discipline - Expand inclusion of specialists involved in curriculum and theme planning - Often teach based on connections among content disciplines that reflect a theme, year-long concept, and/or school plan - Engage some students in the inquiry process across curricular areas - Continue the integration of software and technology to support the curriculum	- Consistently implement activities that connect several disciplines - Routinely involve all specialists in curriculum and theme planning and implementation - Consistently teach based on connections among content disciplines that reflect a theme, year-long concept, and/or school plan - Engage all students in the inquiry process across curricular areas - Fully integrate the use of software and technology to support the curriculum

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Active Hands-on Learning

Students learn concepts, skills, and strategies through observation, discussion, manipulation, and exploration of a variety of authentic materials.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Use teacher presentation as the primary method of instruction - Assign paper and pencil activities to be completed by individuals as follow-up work to information presented	- Gather information on hands-on learning, discovery approaches to learning, and use of manipulatives from: - literature - workshops - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues	- Develop classroom management routines that support students in hands-on learning activities - Identify resources needed to provide hands-on learning experiences in the classroom - Learn how to encourage problem-solving behavior and develop higher order thinking skills through questioning	- Begin to offer students opportunities to learn new concepts, skills, and strategies through observation, discussion, exploration, and manipulation of real materials - Begin to act as a facilitator of learning experiences by modeling, observing, and questioning to encourage problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills - Periodically provide students with materials that encourage hands-on learning	- Frequently offer students opportunities to learn new concepts, skills, and strategies through observation, discussion, exploration, and manipulation of real materials - Sometimes act as a facilitator of learning experiences by modeling, observing, and questioning to encourage problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills - Often provide students with materials that encourage hands-on learning	- Consistently offer students opportunities to learn new concepts, skills, and strategies through observation, discussion, exploration, and manipulation of real materials - Routinely act as a facilitator of learning experiences by modeling, observing, and questioning to encourage problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills - Routinely provide students with materials that encourage hands-on learning

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Age and Individually Appropriate Curriculum and Instruction

Classroom instruction is based on knowledge of chronological and cognitive development and the unique strengths of individual students.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Teach POS objectives for each grade level - Instruct groups of children based on age/grade level expectations	- Recognize that student success is enhanced by implementation of individually appropriate curriculum and instruction - Gather information on design and implementation of age and individually appropriate instruction and curriculum from: - literature - workshops - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues	- Evaluate curriculum and instruction plans for age and individual appropriateness - Identify strategies and techniques that promote age and individually appropriate curriculum and instruction - Develop a plan to implement several strategies and techniques for age and individually appropriate curriculum and instruction	- Begin to use assessment information from multiple sources (e.g., observation, work samples, performance assessments) to identify student learning needs - Begin to use instructional strategies that address the developmental and individual needs of all students (e.g., differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, child-centered activities) - Provide adopted texts with infrequent use of commercial materials, manipulatives, and teacher- or child-made materials	- Sometimes use assessment information from multiple sources (e.g., observation, work samples, performance assessments) to identify student learning needs - Sometimes use instructional strategies that address the developmental and individual needs of all students (e.g., differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, child-centered activities) - Provide some variety of curriculum materials, including the adopted text, commercial materials, manipulatives, and teacher- or child-made materials	- Consistently use assessment information from multiple sources (e.g., observation, work samples, performance assessments) to identify student learning needs - Consistently use instructional strategies that address the developmental and individual needs of all students (e.g., differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, child-centered activities) - Provide access to a large variety of curriculum materials, including the adopted text, commercial materials, manipulatives, and teacher- or child-made materials

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Responsiveness to Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

The classroom environment encourages respect for a variety of perspectives such as the language and customs of the student population. Differentiated instructional strategies addressing the cultural learning styles and linguistic learning needs of students are integrated into the daily curriculum.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
- Develop the classroom environment to reflect the majority culture - Communicate with all parents in English	- Gather information on topics related to cultural and linguistic diversity (e.g., second language acquisition) from: - literature - workshops - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues - Consult with specialists and teaching staff on ways to adapt instructional strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse students	- Evaluate the classroom for materials that are culturally and linguistically representative - Develop a plan to implement instruction adapted to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students - Assess family involvement activities for sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity	- Begin to adapt instruction to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students for some learning experiences - Adapt the classroom environment and materials to be inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse students on special occasions - Begin to provide opportunities for involving culturally and linguistically diverse families in school activities (e.g., interpreters, translations)	- Frequently adapt instruction to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students - Adapt the classroom environment and materials to be inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse students for some activities and centers - Expand opportunities for involving culturally and linguistically diverse families in school activities	- Routinely plan instruction to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students - Consistently provide classroom environment and materials that are inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse students - Consistently provide opportunities for involving culturally and linguistically diverse families in school activities in ways that enrich the curriculum and increase participation in their student's education

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Quality Early Childhood Practices

Authentic Assessment

Student achievement of desired standards and benchmarks is documented by observing, recording, analyzing, and summarizing student work in real-life contexts.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
- Assess students according to textbook requirements - Give students paper and pencil tests (e.g., multiple choice, true/false, short answer) - Record assessment results as numerical scores	- Gather information on types of authentic assessment and its relationship to instruction from: - literature - workshops - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues - Collect information on development of rubrics, narratives, portfolios, etc. - Explore the relationship among assessment, instruction, and reporting progress	- Develop quarterly and year-long assessment plans using authentic assessments - Evaluate the effectiveness of selected assessment tools - Identify authentic assessments tools that match curriculum needs and identify student interests - Design reporting methods that accommodate authentic assessments	- Begin to implement a quarterly/yearly assessment plan including some authentic assessments - Begin to use of a variety of authentic assessment tools (e.g., anecdotal records, portfolios, running records, performance rubrics, self-assessments) - Begin to plan instruction based on evaluation of assessment results	- Expand assessment plan to include additional authentic assessments - Frequently use a variety of authentic assessment tools (e.g., anecdotal records, portfolios, running records, performance rubrics, self-assessments) - Often plan instruction based on evaluation of assessment results	- Fully implement an assessment plan containing a variety of authentic assessments - Consistently use a variety of authentic assessment tools (e.g., anecdotal records, portfolios, running records, performance rubrics, self-assessments) - Consistently plan instruction based on evaluation of assessment results

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Flexible Grouping

Grouping patterns vary according to instructional goals, and student's needs and interests.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Group students according to academic ability - Retain initial grouping, based on standardized assessments, throughout the academic year	- Gather information on patterns of grouping from: a) literature b) workshops c) classroom observations and site visits d) conversations with colleagues	- Develop instructional routines for managing and maintaining flexibility in grouping - Plan group membership in consultation with specialists that work in the classroom	- Begin to use a variety of grouping arrangements for instruction (e.g., large group, small group, pairs, one-to-one) - Start to use a variety of criteria for student grouping (e.g., achievement, skill instruction, student interest, curriculum topics, self-selection, random selection) - Sporadically reevaluate group membership and criteria - Begin to use ongoing assessment to review grouping arrangements	- Frequently use a variety of grouping arrangements for instruction (e.g., large group, small group, pairs, one-to-one) - Often use a variety of criteria for student grouping (e.g., achievement, skill instruction, student interest, curriculum topics, self-selection, random selection) - Frequently reevaluate group membership and criteria - Often use ongoing assessment to review grouping arrangements	- Consistently use a variety of grouping arrangements for instruction (e.g., large group, small group, pairs, one-to-one) - Routinely use a variety of criteria for student grouping (e.g., achievement, skill instruction, student interest, curriculum topics, self-selection, random selection) - Consistently reevaluate group membership and criteria - Regularly use ongoing assessment to revise grouping arrangement

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Differentiated Instruction

Based on the POS, instruction and assessment is adapted to meet the needs of the learner. Strategies that provide a variety of ways to learn as well as assignments and learning experiences with different degrees of difficulty are implemented, while maintaining a consistent instructional focus and high expectations for all students.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
• Instruct according to grade-level curriculum rather than levels of student understanding • Adapt curriculum based on the needs of the group rather than the needs of an individual	▪ Gather information on differentiated instruction from: a) literature b) workshops c) classroom observations and site visits d) conversations with colleagues	▪ Identify strategies and techniques that support differentiated instruction for process, content and evaluation (e.g., compacting, varying questions, interest research groups, learning centers, flexible grouping, tiered assignments, independent and group programs, contracts, mentorships) ▪ Develop a model of instruction that includes meeting the needs of individual students based on assessment information	▪ Begin to gather information through systematic assessment to plan individual and small group learning ▪ Begin to implement strategies for differentiating instruction based on assessment information such as flexible grouping, tiered assignments, and/or multilevel learning centers ▪ Sporadically consult with specialists about strategies to differentiate instruction for students with identified special needs	▪ Frequently gather information through systematic assessment to plan individual and small group learning ▪ Expand use of strategies for differentiating instruction based on assessment information such as flexible grouping, tiered assignments, and/or multilevel learning centers ▪ Occasionally collaborate with specialists about strategies to differentiate instruction for students with identified special needs	▪ Consistently gather information through systematic assessment to plan individual and small group learning ▪ Maximize use of strategies for differentiating instruction based on assessment information such as flexible grouping, tiered assignments, and/or multilevel learning centers ▪ Regularly collaborate in the design and implementation of instruction for students with identified special needs

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Learning Stations

Students interact with materials to explore, discover, practice new skills, and acquire new knowledge through a variety of activities.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
Assign work for students to complete at their desk after each instructional opportunity	- Gather information on developing learning stations from: a) literature b) workshops c) classroom observations and site visits d) conversations with colleagues - Invite colleagues to share details on development of successful learning stations	- Identify materials needed for learning stations - Develop a plan for implementation, management, and evaluation of learning station activities - Develop a plan for implementation and management of student-selected center activities - Survey the class to develop learning stations that reflect student interests and abilities	- Begin to provide learning stations for students to practice previously learned skills and strategies or reinforce recent learning after assigned class work is completed - Assign students to specific learning stations - Develop centers with limited instructional focus and a single expected product - Implement learning stations for students without teacher facilitating activities conducted at the stations	- Provide learning stations for students to practice previously learned skills and strategies, reinforce recent learning, and explore new information each day - Assign students to learning stations at specific times as well as offer opportunities for student selection - Develop centers with a single instructional focus and multilevel activities - Begin to facilitate student engagement at learning stations	- Provide learning stations for students to practice previously learned skills and strategies, reinforce recent learning, explore new information, work on projects that reflect student interest, and enrich POS objectives several times a day - Offer a balance between teacher-selected learning stations and student-selected centers - Develop centers with open-ended and multilevel activities - Consistently facilitate student engagement at learning stations and centers

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Opportunity for Choice

Students are encouraged to select activities that allow them to discover new knowledge, pursue an interest, practice skills, extend understanding, and apply problem-solving strategies.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Organize classroom for whole group or directed activities - Control access to materials and supplies - Assign students to centers, learning stations, or projects	- Gather information on classroom organization and management of opportunities for choice in the learning environment from: - literature - workshops - classroom observations and site visits - conversations with colleagues	- Identify resources needed to provide choice activities - Develop a system for recording and evaluating students during choice activities - Develop a plan for managing choice activities in the classroom	- Begin to provide time, resources, and opportunity for choice activities that allow students to discover, pursue an interest, solve problems, practice skills, apply new knowledge, and meet POS objectives - Begin to offer students opportunities to work as individuals, pairs, small groups, or collaborative learning groups - Occasionally provide students with opportunities for sharing and reflection on choice activities - Begin to record and evaluate observations of student choices	- Frequently provide time, resources, and opportunity for choice activities that allow students to discover, pursue an interest, solve problems, practice skills, apply new knowledge, and meet POS objectives - Often offer students opportunities to work as individuals, pairs, small groups, or collaborative learning groups - Usually provide students with opportunities for sharing and reflection on choice activities - Often record and evaluate observations of student choices and provide student with feedback	- Consistently provide time, resources, and opportunity for choice activities that allow students to discover, pursue an interest, solve problems, practice skills, apply new knowledge, and meet POS objectives - Consistently offer students opportunities to work as individuals, pairs, small groups, or collaborative learning groups - Routinely provide students with opportunities for sharing and reflection on choice activities - Routinely record and evaluate observations of student choices and provide student with feedback

Quality Early Childhood Practices

Meaningful and Relevant Curriculum

Curriculum is designed to meet the POS and SOL objectives and make connections to the lives and experiences of the students.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Choose themes for instruction based on textbook topics or teacher interest - Plan lessons with minimal determination of the background knowledge of the students - Teach each lesson independent of other lessons	- Gather information on meaningful and relevant curriculum from: - literature - classroom observations and site visits - workshops - discussion groups - Survey parents and children to determine the family backgrounds and experiences of the school community - Form a committee to look for connections between community resources and curriculum topics	- Learn a variety of instructional techniques that develop and assess background knowledge of students - Review currently used instructional materials for relevance to students' lives using information from the community survey - Develop a plan to study the POS objectives and the community survey results to identify common themes - Create a resource bank that lists people and places in the community with skills and information that support the curriculum	- Begin to plan instruction that connects the interests and experiences of the students with POS objectives - Begin to use instructional techniques that develop student background knowledge - Sometimes develop instruction around themes or concepts to help students make meaningful connections across disciplines - Sporadically plan learning experiences so that new learning builds on previous learning - Begin to use community resources (e.g., speakers, field trip locations, mentors, etc.) to support curriculum objectives	- Often plan instruction that connects the interests and experiences of the students with POS objectives - Expand the use of techniques that develop student background knowledge - Usually develop instruction around themes or concepts to help students make meaningful connections across disciplines - Frequently plan learning experiences so that new learning builds on previous learning - Often use community resources (e.g., speakers, field trip locations, mentors) to support curriculum objectives	- Routinely plan instruction that connects the interests and experiences of the students with POS objectives - Consistently use techniques that develop student background knowledge as part of instruction - Routinely develop instruction around themes or concepts to help students make meaningful connections across disciplines - Consistently plan learning experiences so that new learning builds on previous learning - Consistently use community resources (e.g., speakers, field trip locations, mentors) to support curriculum objectives

Quality Early Childhood Practices

A Safe and Supportive Classroom Environment

The learning environment is safe and nurturing. It is organized for the purpose of developing a community of learners by supporting the work children do, reflecting their unique qualities, and celebrating their individual and collective accomplishments.

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			Emergent	Transition	Proficient
- Display materials that reflect the teacher's interests and experiences - Arrange classroom environment based upon the group rather than individual student differences - Arrange workspaces without clear boundaries - Set broad rules and general routines	- Gather information on safe and supportive classroom environments from: a) literature b) workshops c) classroom observations and site visits - Collect information on teaching students problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies	- Consult with the teaching team and develop a plan for modifying the learning environment to reflect a safe and supportive environment - Identify defining characteristics of a safe and supportive classroom environment - Develop a plan to teach students problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies - Identify resources necessary for creating a safe and supportive classroom environment (e.g., funds, staff, materials)	- Begin to arrange the environment to meet the unique needs of students and instructional groups of different sizes (e.g., large group, individual work) - Create a few clearly defined spaces with accessible, organized, and labeled materials - Begin to display student work and instructional materials in ways that are aesthetically pleasing and celebrate student accomplishments - Begin to build on individual strengths of students to promote appreciation of student as valued member of classroom - Sporadically reflect diversity in classroom materials and displays (e.g., racial, cultural, linguistic, disability)	- Continue to arrange the environment to meet the unique needs of students and instructional groups of different sizes (e.g., large group, individual work) - Create several clearly defined centers with accessible, organized, and labeled materials - Often display student work and instructional materials in ways that are aesthetically pleasing and celebrate student accomplishments - Usually build on individual strengths of students to promote appreciation of student as valued member of classroom - Frequently reflect diversity in classroom materials and displays (e.g., racial, cultural, linguistic, disability)	- Ensure that the arrangement of the environment meets the unique needs of students and instructional groups of different sizes (e.g., large group, individual work) - Create a variety of clearly defined centers with accessible, organized, and labeled materials - Routinely display student work and instructional materials in ways that are aesthetically pleasing and celebrate student accomplishments - Routinely build on individual strengths of students to promote appreciation of student as valued member of classroom - Consistently reflect diversity in classroom materials and displays (e.g., racial, cultural, linguistic, disability)

Baseline	Investigation	Exploration	Implementation		
			<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
			- Sometimes collaborate with students to define rules and routines that promote student responsibility and problem solving - Allocate resources to support limited implementation of a safe and supportive classroom environment (e.g., funds, staff, materials, equipment)	- Frequently collaborate with students to define rules and routines that promote student responsibility and problem solving - Allocate resources to support implementation of a safe and supportive classroom environment (e.g., funds, staff, materials, equipment)	- Consistently collaborate with students to define rules and routines that promote student responsibility and problem solving - Maximize resources to support full implementation of a safe and supportive classroom environment (e.g., funds, staff, materials, equipment)

Glossary of Terms

Anecdotal Notes	Written records describing student behaviors during learning activities. These notes focus on what the student is able to do and next instructional steps.
Assessment	Consistent, ongoing documentation and evaluation of students' knowledge, processes, and products.
Assessment Tool	Any form or instrument (e.g., running record, learning log, spelling test) used to record information on student progress.
Authentic Assessment	Assessment measures that capture what the student is able to do when performing the task being evaluated. For example, evaluating a student's writing ability by looking at a piece of writing rather than by having the student add punctuation to a group of sentences.
Classroom Management	The organization of the classroom environment, activities, materials, and grouping of students to support learning, including routines and procedures developed to allow students to work without constant supervision of the teacher.
Collaborative Learning	Students of mixed ability work together as a group to solve a problem, complete a project, or achieve a common goal.
Content Areas	Areas of study in the elementary curriculum (e.g., writing, math, social studies). Also referred to as disciplines.
Documentation	The collection of data from a variety of sources that demonstrates student understanding of the concepts, skills, and strategies being learned.
Exploration	Opportunities to study concepts and materials to discover their distinctive and defining features.
Hands-on	Learning supported by the use of manipulative materials.
Higher Order Thinking Skills	Thinking skills that move students beyond recall of information to predicting, inferring, comparing/contrasting, classifying, generalizing, hypothesizing, summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing.
Learning Centers	A classroom organized into learning areas containing activities based on broad overall learning goals that offer multileveled discovery of knowledge.
Learning Stations	Multileveled activities, usually designed by the teacher, with specific planned learning goals. Students interact with materials to explore, discover, practice new skills, and acquire new knowledge.
Open-ended	Activities that have no quantitative learning goals, thereby allowing the students to engage with the activity as long as they maintain interest in the topic. For example, directions at the science table might read, "Record your observations about these leaves" rather than, "Write three things you observe about the leaves."
Portfolios	Organized collections of student work that demonstrate academic growth and self-assessment.
Reflection	The opportunity to think, consider, and discuss topics, programs, or teaching practices.
Rubrics	A set of standard statements that represent different levels of behavior or performance and provide teachers and students with explicit criteria for measuring student work.

Glossary of Terms

School Community	Teachers, parents, students, school staff, and community members within a school's geographic boundaries.
Student Interest	Topics, skills, and strategies students wish to learn more about.
Student Needs	Instructional, physical, social, or emotional conditions that must be met in order for the student to be successful. For example, one need of a hard of hearing child may be a sign language interpreter.
Teaching Team	Teachers who work together to instruct a group of children. Teams may be dependent on the needs of the students, the availability of staff, and objectives of the curriculum.